Australian Bureau of Statistics

6220.0 - Persons Not in the Labour Force, Australia, Sep 2004

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MEDIA RELEASE

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One in four people not in the labour force

Note: This media release was distributed to media on Friday, 11 March 2005.

Just over one in four Australians aged 15 to 69 years (3.8 million people) were not in the labour force (i.e. neither employed nor unemployed) in September 2004, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

These people made up 27% of Australia's civilian population aged 15-69 years, a proportion which has remained steady over the last few years. Of people not in the labour force, just under one-third (31%) wanted to work and almost two-thirds (65%) were women.

There were 855,300 people with marginal attachment to the labour force (see media note). Most of these (92% or 789,900 people) said they wanted to work and were available to start work within 4 weeks, but were not actively looking for work. The remainder (65,400) were actively looking for work but were not available to start work at the time of the survey.

Other characteristics of people with marginal attachment to the labour force include:

- 70% of women and 45% of men had a preference for part-time work over full-time work
- the main reasons for not actively looking for work reported by men were 'attending an educational institution' (32%) and 'own ill health or physical disability' (22%)
- for women, the main reasons for not actively looking for work were 'child care' (32%) and 'attending an educational institution' (15%)
- 82,000 or 9.6% were classed as discouraged job seekers because, although they wanted to work and could have started within four weeks, they were not actively looking for work. The main reasons given were 'considered too old by employers' (33% of discouraged job seekers), 'lacked necessary schooling, training, skills or experience' (25%) and 'no jobs in locality or line of work' (23%).

Over three-quarters (78%) of the 3.8 million people not in the labour force were without marginal attachment to the labour force. Of these, 11% or 333,400 people wanted to work, but were neither actively looking nor available to start within four weeks.

Further information is in **Persons not in the Labour Force, Australia, September 2004** (cat. no. 6220.0).

Media Note: People not in the labour force are defined as **marginally attached** to the labour force if they want to work, and are either not actively looking for work but are available to start

work within four weeks, or are actively looking for work but are not available to start in the survey reference week.

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